

The Center For Civic Engagement University Of Texas At Brownsville/Texas Southmost College

Organization Description

The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College (UTB/TSC) is a partnership between a four-year university and a two-year junior college, creating the first “community university” in Texas. Responding to community needs, UTB/TSC created the Center for Civic Engagement in 1999 to engage faculty and students in community service learning experiences to help build capacity in various faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) and neighborhoods. Since 2001, the Center has been actively engaged in working with FBCOs by delivering on-going service learning projects grouped around wellness, literacy, and microbusiness Web services to Buena Vida barrio residents and business owners.

Project Description

The Center will create a new, sustainable social service network called the Buena Vida F.I.T.ness (Families in Transition) Network to help Buena Vida families transition from welfare to work. The F.I.T.ness Network will be a partnership with FBCOs and a new, resident-led F.I.T.ness Network Council. The Center will provide capacity-building technical assistance, sub-awards and on-going strategic leadership to the F.I.T.ness Network to deliver sustainable Web services to provide skills and knowledge to barrio

families wanting to improve their personal lives and transition from welfare to work.

Geographic Scope of Project

Buena Vida (“Good Life”) barrio in Brownsville, Texas—includes 2954 residents and 837 families

Partnering Organizations

- United Way of Southern Cameron County

Sub-Awards

Designed to help smaller FBCOs build organizational capacity to deliver the Web services to the residents of Buena Vida barrio, sub-awards will total \$470,000 over three years. Sub-awards will be made on a competitive basis to newer FBCOs that have annual budgets of less than \$250,000 and that desire to create new or expand existing bi-lingual wellness, education, or business training and outreach in the Buena Vida barrio. Each sub-award may be renewable for up to three years. During the three years, approximately 20 sub-awards will be made in ranges of \$5,000 to \$50,000. In the first year, the Center will make 5 sub-awards, 7 in the second year, and 8 in the third year.

Project Objectives

1. Deliver capacity-building training services to 100 FBCOs;

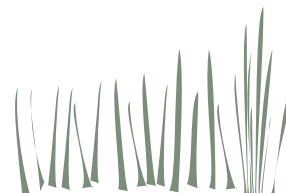
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2. Award \$470,000 in sub-grants to FBCOs;
3. Create the F.I.T.ness Network with 60% of the sub-grantees delivering on-going, sustainable Web services to residents;
4. Form the F.I.T.ness Council as a sustainable and independent partner, providing strategic leadership to the F.I.T.ness Network;
5. Have a minimum of 75% of barrio residents using the Web services with 25% reporting improved lives and progress in transition from welfare to work.



Compassion Capital Fund

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Project Strategies

The grant consists of four strategic components creating the Buena Vida F.I.T.ness Network:

- Civic engagement/service learning;
- Faculty and scholarship of engagement;
- Faith-based and community organizations;
- A new Buena Vida neighborhood council composed of residents to provide strategic leadership.

Grant Award Amount

\$586,229